

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

COVID-19 HATE CRIMES ACT— Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 937, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 937) to facilitate the expedited review of COVID-19 hate crimes, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Hirono/Collins) amendment No. 1445, of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

AMENDMENT NOS. 1456, 1425, AND 1458 TO
AMENDMENT NO. 1445

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order be executed with respect to the reporting of the three amendments under the consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. CRUZ] proposes an amendment numbered 1456 to amendment No. 1445.

The amendment is, as follows:

[Purpose: To prohibit Federal funding for any institution of higher education that discriminates against Asian Americans in recruitment, applicant review, or admissions]

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 6. PROHIBITION OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ASIAN AMERICANS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no institution of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) may receive any Federal funding if the institution has a policy in place or engages in a practice that discriminates against Asian Americans in recruitment, applicant review, or admissions.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. LEE, proposes an amendment numbered 1425 to amendment No. 1445.

The amendment is, as follows:

[Purpose: To require a report on State restrictions on religious exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic]

Strike section 3 and insert the following:

SEC. 3. REPORT ON RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the restrictions on religious exercise imposed by States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and any other territory

or possession of the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required to be submitted under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of whether the same restrictions applied to religious institutions also applied equally to secular organizations or businesses; and

(2) an analysis of whether each imposed restriction complies with the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Tandon v. Newsom*, No. 20A151, 539 U.S. ____ (2021).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mrs. BLACKBURN] proposes an amendment numbered 1458 to amendment No. 1445.

(Purpose: To improve the bill.)

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of April 21, 2021, under “Text of Amendments.”)

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EARTH DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today is Earth Day, our planet’s largest annual civic event. More than 1 billion people in 192 nations are expected to participate in activities to draw attention to the urgency of the climate crisis and environmental degradation. From the South Side of Chicago to South America and South Asia, ordinary citizens—schoolchildren, scientists, environmental activists, business and government leaders, and others—are calling for help for our ailing planet.

This year, the most important Earth Day gathering is just 16 blocks from where we meet. At the White House today, President Biden is hosting a 2-day virtual summit of leaders from 40 Nations—leaders from the highest emitting countries, China, India, Russia, as well as leaders from countries that suffer the worst consequences, such as Bangladesh and Kenya. The leaders are coming together, after a year of staggering pandemic hardship and climate-related crises, to renew their commitment to save our planet from irreversible climate catastrophe.

With this Earth Day Leaders Summit, President Biden is sending the world a clear message: The United States is back and is ready to be a leader again in combating climate change. The White House Leaders Summit is meant to encourage countries to make strong commitments under the Paris Agreement to prevent the global average temperature from rising more than 1.5 degree Celsius above preindustrial levels. This sounds technical and dry and wonky, but here is what it means. At 1½ degrees Celsius of warming, much of the world will likely see sea level rise that swallows coast-

lines, leaves millions of homes underwater, and produces recordbreaking droughts, floods, and other climate catastrophes. Hundreds of millions of people will be pushed into poverty because of this, and climate-related famine and conflicts would trigger a global refugee crisis worse than anything we have ever seen. That is the future if we do nothing. That is something we must avoid, and the United States needs to show leadership.

President Biden does that today with this meeting. One of his first official acts as President, on his first full day in office, was starting the process of recommitting the United States to join every nation in the world in the Paris Agreement. If you will remember, the previous President decided that America would step away from that.

At the White House Leaders Summit, the President will announce a new goal: to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent by the year 2030. The Biden administration’s leadership stands in sharp contrast to what we have seen over the last 4 years. We saw a President withdraw from the Paris Agreement, ridicule science at every opportunity, deny the existence of a growing climate threat, and even censor the remarks of government scientists that might suggest otherwise.

Fortunately, the disengagement by the previous administration didn’t prevent the American people, scientists, real business leaders and entrepreneurs, and cities and States from ignoring President Trump and moving ahead.

There is no substitute, though, for leadership at the top. The American Jobs Plan, which President Biden plans to pass, and I hope there is support, is a plan to secure America’s global economic leadership, strengthen America’s working families, and build the infrastructure of the future we can count on. The American Jobs Plan, of course, will rebuild America’s crumbling rail lines, roads, bridges, ports, and water systems; strengthen America’s power grid; and invest in 5G broadband internet for every community in America. The previous President promised it but didn’t deliver. This President wants to deliver, with our help.

I have heard those on the floor who then criticize that part of the American Jobs Plan, which goes further. President Biden also wants to invest in green energy, wind, solar, and other renewable energy projects. To hear that described by some of his Republican critics, it is just pure socialism. Socialism? It is a realistic response to the 21st challenge of climate change. The American Jobs Plan includes billions of dollars to retrain any workers who are dislocated if they work in the fossil fuel industry and to find better, well-paying jobs with a future in clean energy and other fields. Just this week, the president of the United Mine Workers of America—a sixth generation